

# BOOK REVIEWS

CALIFORNIA MEDICINE does not review all books sent to it by the publishers. A list of new books received is carried in the Advertising Section.

**GREEK MEDICINE IN ASIA AND OTHER ESSAYS**—Major General S. L. Bhatia, CIE, MC., MA., MD. (Cantab.) FRCP (Lond.), FRS (E), FASC., Indian Medical Service (Retired). With a Foreword by H. E. Shri V. V. Giri, President of India. Indian Institute of World Culture, 6, B. P. Wadia Road, Basavangudi, Bangalore-4, India, 1970. 226 pages, no price in dollars listed.

It is fortunate that the author of this volume was widely recognized in his country as an outstanding physician and medical scientist and that he was elected to many important posts in the medical and scientific societies of India, for most of the essays included in this book are special lectures or presidential addresses to these societies. Fortunately, in spite of their disparate conception and delivery, the twelve individual essays form a harmonious whole and disclose the author as an erudite and scholarly physician. It is obvious that Dr. Bhatia's favorite avocation was the study of medical history of India and the Western World, for each of the essays reflects traces of a serious preoccupation with the evolution of medicine in India and its traces and connections with medicine in the West. As was to be expected, the first essay on "Greek Medicine in Asia" is by far the most important and far-reaching of his various studies.

The medical system based on Greek medicine is known in India as *Unani* medicine, and in the introductory chapter Dr. Bhatia confirms his familiarity with the evolution of Greek medicine by tracing its initial arrival in India to the armies of Alexander the Great in the third century B.C. On later occasions, and after the spread of the Moslem religion, other waves of Greek learning brought further knowledge of Greek medicine into India and was much revered. While these statements are entirely correct, it is worth noticing that Dr. Bhatia tends to fall victim to the Asian practice of priorism which induces him to state that the Indian physicians, Charaka and Sushruta, had preceded Hippocrates by several centuries in dissociating medicine from theology and magic. Whether this precedence of Charaka and Sushruta over Hippocrates was a historical fact can neither be confirmed nor denied, because early Indian history is almost wholly devoid of reliable chronicity.

But regardless of this and other somewhat chauvinistic statements, Dr. Bhatia's book is pleasantly informative and quite convincing in content. It also reflects the serious preoccupation of Indian physicians with the importance of their own medical history, and its debt to Western inspiration. It is to be hoped that The Indian Institute of World Culture which has espoused many praiseworthy causes will succeed in a worldwide dissemination of this important volume.

ILZA VEITH, PH.D.

**THE ARTERIAL ANATOMY OF THE KIDNEY**—F. T. Graves, M.S., F.R.C.S. The Williams and Wilkins Company, 428 E. Preston St., Baltimore, Md. (21202), 1971. 101 pages, \$13.00.

This delightful little red book describes the author's original study of the arteries of the kidney and their sig-

nificance in surgery. The style is relaxed (Chapter One begins, "It was a hot summer's afternoon in 1952. A bluebottle buzzed intermittently outside the theatre window. . .") yet clearly descriptive. The illustrations are excellent, and include many in full color depicting specimens injected to make multicolored arterial casts. Finally, the application of the author's findings to actual operations on the kidney is so clearly described and illustrated that the urologic surgeon can make good use of them.

FRANK HINMAN, JR., M.D.

**COMMON SKIN DISEASES—Diagnosis and Treatment—2nd Ed.**—Howard T. Behrman, M.D., Professor of Clinical Dermatology and Director of Dermatologic Research, New York Medical College; Theodore A. Labow, M.D., Instructor in Dermatology, College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University; Jack H. Rozen, M.D., Assistant in Dermatology, College of Physicians & Surgeons, Columbia University. Grune & Stratton, Inc., 757 Third Ave., New York City (10017), 1971. 189 pages, \$15.00.

This text is the second edition of an original publication in 1965. The original title, *The Practitioner's Illustrated Dermatology*, would seem more appropriate than the title of the second edition, *Common Skin Diseases: Diagnosis and Treatment*. This text is primarily an illustrated tour through the common entities in dermatologic practice. The pictorial content is all in color and excellently done. The photographs occupy about half of the space in the text and are cleverly arranged on one side of the page opposite to the clinical description and suggested therapy for the disease in question. On the surface, this would seem to be an excellent way to identify common skin diseases and thereby make a diagnosis on a given patient in the office. However, it is, in fact, not so simple and one might seriously question whether such a text does more harm than good as far as the practitioner's management of dermatologic disease is concerned. The format would be helpful to one unsophisticated in dermatology, if he had no access to a specialist in the field. This would also be a useful and pleasantly simple text for the beginning student in dermatology. There is a section at the end of the book concerning principles of treatment and specific agents to be used in topical therapy as well as internal medications for control of dermatologic disease. Again, there are gross oversimplifications but it contains useful orientation for the uninitiated.

RICHARD B. STOUGHTON, M.D.

**THE INTERVERTEBRAL DISC**—Anthony F. DePalma, M.D., Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, Jefferson Medical College, Thomas Jefferson University; and Richard H. Rothman, M.D., Ph.D., Associate Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, Jefferson Medical College. W. B. Saunders Company, West Washington Square, Philadelphia, Pa. (19105), 1970. 373 pages, \$16.50.

"No operation in any field of surgery leaves in its wake more human wreckage than surgery on lumbar discs." By this statement the authors of this quite excellent and reasonably current text reveal their broad personal experience